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CIA Inspires Confidence Of Former Director

By The Tribune-Review

William Colby, director of the CIA under President Richard Nixon, believes the quality of American intelligence is so good as to "almost eliminate" the need for verification of Russian missile capabilities.

On top of this, he believes President Reagan should have responded more positively to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's offers concerning verification and other arms control matters. "Those offers reflected a major change in Soviet attitude," Colby said, "We shouldn't have turned them all down."

Speaking at a World Affairs Council "Noon Briefing" in Pittsburgh, Colby said a nuclear arms race is unwinnable, unilateral restraint is unworkable, and a world under the nuclear gun is "unlivable."

At an earlier press conference he said the arms race can and must be stopped through negotiations. "We are diverting too many resources to the race, resources that could be used to reduce the deficit and solve more pressing problems," he said.

"There's a growing sense of unreality concerning nuclear missiles, while the threat grows stronger as the time between launch and impact grows shorter," he added. "The experts on this (nuclear war) seem to be out of control."

Colby also said he opposed the Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars) because it was the "... wrong strategy, too expensive with ambiguous results." He said that no defense program could keep out all attacking missiles and that the small percentage that got through would still cause great damage.

Colby was joined later by Thomas Powers, a contributing editor of *Atlantic* magazine, also an SDI opponent. Both men spoke as members of the Committee for National Security at Carnegie-Mellon University. Powers outlined the "nuclear winter" effect following a potential nuclear war.

Today the CIA "is the best intelligence unit in the world," Colby said. He admitted that following the Vietnam War and the Watergate episode, the CIA declined. But he claimed the agency has made a comeback — but it needs more manpower abroad.

"People do not realize the CIA goes far beyond spying. The agents gather intelligence (not all of a military nature) which is analyzed in a central location so that we can better understand the world," he said.

The agency has changed greatly, he reported, moving toward heavy use of technology — computers, listening devices, seismic equipment, etc. "We haven't had a strategic weapons surprise since Sputnik," he reported.

Colby is concerned about the recent leaks and surge in spy cases. Some of them could have a significant impact on security if the Russians "determine our sources," he said.

No longer are we in an age of the spy motivated by ideology, Colby said. Most of today's spies are "little people selling out for a few bucks," he added. Most people are no longer inspired by the "Soviet model."

The increase in spy/leak cases happens, Colby explained, "because we are doing a better job of detection," there are too many Soviet agents in the country, we offer an open society, and "because the mood of the country" has shifted toward anti-communism.

Colby claimed Yuri Andropov had vastly improved the KGB. He said, "We must pull up our socks on this leak business," via successful prosecution. He believes the number of Soviet "diplomats" and "visitors" should be reduced and that we "deal with the Soviets strictly on a reciprocal basis."

The definition of "secret" (classified materials) should be set by each administration, Colby suggested, because the variables threatening national security change.

Are there spy "moles" in the CIA? "We must assume there are moles and implement a vigorous security system, distributing information on a need-to-know basis only," he responded.

Do we spy on our friends? Colby was non-committal, except to say two questions were asked before such decisions were made — would the information gathered be valuable, and what are the risks involved? He said spying on Canada, for example, would not be worth the potential for bad reaction if the activities were discovered.

Colby, now a practicing attorney, said he believes in covert activities in foreign nations — even to the paramilitary level. "We (CIA) ran a full-scale war in Northern Laos for quite some time," he said. But these activities, according to Colby, must fall under the rules of war, which reject torture and assassination.

Do ideological or political trends dictate CIA activities? "National interests determine covert wars," he said. Of course, those interests may be set by "political preferences."

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